

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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FM AMCONSUL SURABAYA
TO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 0982
AMCONSUL MEDAN

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, ID
SUBJ: ELECTION CAMPAIGN VIOLENCE IN EAST JAVA

1. SUMMARY: THE FIRST GUNSHOTS OF THE EAST JAVA ELECTION CAMPAIGN WERE FIRED FEBRUARY 26 IN SITUBONDO. AN ARGUMENT OVER CAMPAIGN POSTERS CULMINATED IN SECURITY FORCES FIRING ON MUSLIMS, WOUNDING SEVERAL. FEELINGS IN THE AREA ARE RUNNING HIGH. END SUMMARY.

2. ON THE EVENING OF 26 FEBRUARY 1977, AT ABOUT 1730, GOLKAR ACTIVISTS IN SITUBONDO TOWN, SITUBONDO DISTRICT, WHILE PLACING GOLKAR CAMPAIGN POSTERS ON WALLS, ELECTRIC POLES, ETC., BEGAN STICKING THEM ON TOP OF POSTERS PLACED EARLIER BY THE PPP. SEVERAL MUSLIMS WHO WERE WATCHING BECAME INCENSED BECAUSE THE GOLKAR POSTERS WERE TOUCHING THE SACRED KA'BAH SYMBOL ON THE PPP POSTERS AND REPORTED THIS TO A RADICAL MUSLIM GROUP CALLED ANSOR, REPORTEDLY ACTIVE IN THE SITUBONDO AREA. THIS INCIDENT WAS APPARENTLY THE CULMINATION OF SEVERAL RECENT GOLKAR CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES WHICH HAVE STIRRED UP MUSLIM SENTIMENTS IN SITUBONDO.

3. AS THE POSTERING CONTINUED A GROUP OF MUSLIMS
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GATHERED AND BEGAN SHOUTING AT THE GOLKAR WORKERS. SOON THE MUSLIMS WERE TEARING DOWN GOLKAR SIGNS, THE GOLKAR ACTIVISTS BEGAN SHOUTING BACK, AND A BRAWL ENSUED. HANSIP GUARDS AND POLICE, ATTEMPTING TO STOP THE FIGHT, WERE ACCUSED BY THE MUSLIMS OF BEING PRO-GOLKAR AND ANTI-PPP. THE MOB ENCIRCLED THE SECURITY OFFICIALS AND BEGAN ATTACKING THEM. AFTER A WARNING SHOT WAS FIRED INTO THE AIR WITHOUT

EFFECT, THE SECURITY OFFICIALS SHOT THEIR WAY OUT OF THE ENCIRCLEMENT. AT LEAST TWO MUSLIMS RECEIVED ABDOMINAL WOUNDS AND AN UNKNOWN NUMBER RECEIVED LEG WOUNDS.

4. THE INCIDENT ENDED WHEN WORD SPREAD THAT ADDITIONAL SECURITY FORCES WERE ENROUTE TO THE SCENE AND THE MOB DISPERSED. REPORTEDLY FEELINGS ARE RUNNING HIGH IN THE AREA AND THE LOCAL OFFICIALS ARE ATTEMPTING TO COOL DOWN TEMPERS AND TO COUNSEL THE VARIOUS POLITICAL PARTY ACTIVISTS. SEVERAL LEADERS FROM BOTH GROUPS WERE ARRESTED AND ARE BEING INTERROGATED. MERDEKA CARRIED BRIEF VERSION OF STORY, ADDING ONE VICTIM IN CRITICAL CONDITION AT JEMBER HOSPITAL. NO OTHER MEDIA REPORTS HAVE COME TO OUR ATTENTION.

5. COMMENT: AS CAMPAIGN BUILDS UP, INCIDENTS CAN HAPPEN AT ANY TIME IN POOR AND STRONGLY MUSLIM PARTS OF EASTJAVA (OFTEN AREAS WHERE MADURESE LIVE.) IN ADDITION TO SITUBONDO, POTENTIAL TROUBLE SPOTS INCLUDE JOMBANG, MOJOKERTO, PROBOLINGO, LUMAJANG, MADURA, PASURUAN AND PERHAPS GRESIK. (RECENT ARRESTS OF MUSLIM EXTREMISTS REPORTED IN PRESS TOOK PLACE IN MOJOKERTO AND JOMBANG.) SUCH INCIDENTS HAVE OBVIOUS POTENTIAL FOR SNOWBALLING INTO MORE SERIOUS DISORDERS. WE WILL STAY ON THE ALERT FOR THEM AND REPORT.

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